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Schinz, Albert

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a
forerunner of Pragmatism.

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Jean-Jacques Rousseau

A Forerunner of Pragmatism

By
Albert Schinz

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Puis j'ai vu que l'homme a besoin de pen-
sées étroites. . . . Renan "Le prêtre de Némé"

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FOREWORD.

IN a book written by the author of this pamphlet, mention is made of Rousseau in the following terms: "The greatest pragmatist of all times was—and probably will remain—J.-J. Rousseau" (cf. *Anti-Pragmatisme*, pp. 162-168). This affirmation was well worth the fuller development given it in the following pages. It deserved it not only because pragmatism happens to be now a timely topic of discussion, but because an examination of the pragmatic principles contained in Rousseau leads us to the very heart of his entire philosophy. There you get the key, both to the Utopian loftiness of his moral ideals, and to his hopeless inconsistencies; both to the great influence of his social doctrines even to our own days, and to the stubborn resistance opposed to his principles by the consistently intellectual minds of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

A few references are made to the French edition of *Anti-Pragmatisme* (Paris, Alcan, 1909), of which an English edition will soon appear.

ALBERT SCHINZ.

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE.

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU, A FORERUNNER OF PRAGMATISM.

I DEFINE pragmatism as a philosophy that judges of the value of theories and ideas from their consequences, i. e., from the practical results which they yield to the thinker when he proceeds to apply them to reality.

Pragmatic results may be understood as scientific results; but in this case it becomes obvious that pragmatism is only another word for science, and hardly worth retaining our attention. Of course we consider, and man has always considered, true or satisfactory, a law or an idea which yields results, and none else; and if a law or an idea explains nothing or accounts for nothing, it is given up. So this scientific pragmatism is not, cannot be, what pragmatists have in mind, for they would not have started a new philosophical school to say something that nobody ever denied, the very thing and the only thing which all scientific, philosophical, theological minds have always agreed upon since the dawn of conscious thinking. Of course William James says, "a new name for an old thing"; still we have too high an opinion of Professor James and others who followed him to believe that the "old thing" was the commonplace truth which the world has owned so long, and which science in our epoch is applying so frantically everywhere. Or else, one might just as well start a new system of astronomy to prove that the sun shines at noon and remains invisible at night.

There is only one alternative: if pragmatic results do

not mean *scientific* results, they must mean practical results from the point of view of "practical reason" as opposed to "pure reason," in other words, ethical results. And if this is what pragmatism means, then everybody will grant that there is something relatively new in it, in so far as there was never before so bold an attempt to reduce philosophy to moral philosophy; or, I should rather say, that never could an attempt *appear* so bold, since we live in a scientific era when strictly scientific results alone are recognized by scholars, while ethical or esthetic preoccupations are considered among them as intruding elements.

So the whole quarrel about pragmatism originates from the vagueness of the word "result," or "practical value"; the pragmatists endeavoring to make modern philosophy adopt ethical pragmatism instead of scientific pragmatism; and as they are entirely different things, as they are in fact incompatible things, scholars resist the attempt.¹ With this conception also the word of James, "a new name for an old thing," gets a very satisfactory meaning; namely, that man has always been inclined to judge philosophical theories from their ethical results. Pragmatism is simply the philosophy which tries to establish this conception of things on a systematic basis, to justify this natural inclination.

It is of this ethical pragmatism—the only one which has a clear and distinct meaning—that Rousseau is a forerunner.²

THE SCIENTIFIC PHASE OF ROUSSEAU'S THOUGHT.

It might be interesting, and I think very relevant, to point out first a remarkable symmetry in the philosophical evolution of Rousseau and James, the latter being by far

¹ See the writer's *Anti-pragmatisme* (Paris, 1909) pp. 26-37.

² The words *pragmatisme*, or *pragmatique*, are of course not to be found in Rousseau. In *Nouvelle Héloïse* (II, 5) he speaks of Julie's father saying: "*Se fille lui est moins chère que la Pragmatique*"; but here the political act of Charles VI of Austria is meant by which (1713) this emperor assured the throne to Marie-Thérèse as his successor.

the chief representative of pragmatism; there can be no doubt that without him the movement would have been still-born.

We observe that both thinkers came to pragmatic ideas after a period of enthusiasm for pure science. James began by studying natural sciences; he took an M. D., and at first taught anatomy at Harvard University. Then he went over to psychology and wrote his most famous work, and finally he produced his pragmatistic papers and books. These facts can be interpreted thus: When he began to look at things for himself and reflect on them, James was at first interested in the universe in a purely objective way; he looked at it as a product which he liked to study in a perfectly impersonal manner. Then, secondly, he saw that the world was still more interesting when viewed from a human standpoint, from the psychological standpoint; that man, moreover, cannot view it from any other point of view, absolute truth being outside of our means of perception. Then he wrote his great work, *Psychology*. Finally he came to the conclusion that man has an interest in the world not only from a human, in the sense of a psychological, standpoint, but from an ethical, or may be religious standpoint, as well; that man not only studies life, he lives it, he has a practical interest in it. Then he wrote *Pragmatism*.

Rousseau's philosophical evolution describes exactly the same curve. Everybody remembers in the *Confessions* what he tells of his reading in mathematics, physics, chemistry and so forth, when living with Madame de Warens;³ and especially the delightful scene where he is accused of necromancy by passers-by who see him in a garden at midnight studying astronomy in grotesque attire, moving a telescope backward and forward with mysterious gestures, and stretched out before, or rather under, a map of the sky

³ See especially Book VI. Cf. also Ritter: *Famille et jeunesse de J. J. Rousseau*, pp. 219 ff.

illuminated by the weird light of a candle standing in a flower pot;⁴ or the account of how he nearly blinded himself for life by careless handling of chemical substances in an unfortunate attempt to manufacture "*encre de sympathie*";⁵ or again when he himself tells so charmingly (always in the *Confessions*) that his famous *polype au coeur* which disappeared so miraculously before he came near the doctor, when a pretty woman appeared on the scene,⁶ was nothing but the result of overstudy of books on anatomy, physiology and medicine; for, like the famous Dutch physician he could not read the description of a disease without at once feeling perfectly satisfied that he was suffering from it. Finally I need not insist on Rousseau's fondness for botany which first developed at that period also.⁷

Rousseau did not teach sciences, as did Professor James, but he made use of his knowledge in mathematics as a member of the staff entrusted by Charles Emanuel III with the survey of the kingdom of Savoy. He also wrote in Chambéry in 1738, and published in the *Mercure de France* of July, a "*Mémoire sur la sphéricité de la terre.*" Better still, Rousseau wrote in Paris, probably about 1747, a treatise on chemistry in four parts, *Les institutions chimiques*, the manuscripts of which have been kept in the city library at Geneva since 1904.

THE PHYSIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL PHASE.

The second period of Rousseau's philosophical development corresponds to that in which James wrote his *Psychology*. Now we must remember that in his book James

⁴ *Œuvres*, VIII, 171-2.

⁵ *Œuvres*, VIII, 155. That the rumor spread of Rousseau's experiments, see Ritter, *Famille et jeunesse de J. J. Rousseau* (1896), p. 221.

⁶ *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 177-8: "...Voilà Mme. de Larnage qui m'entreprend; et adieu le pauvre Jean-Jacques, ou plutôt adieu la fièvre, les vapeurs, le polype...."

⁷ *Œuvres*, VIII, p. 128.

has given up the traditional treatment of the three faculties, sentiment, intelligence, will. He offers a sort of natural history of our mental faculties in connection with, or even taking as a basis, our sensations, hence the name of "experimental" or "physiological" psychology given to the modern science we all know.

This conception of things goes naturally as far back as the 18th century, to Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*. Indeed we can almost say that the works of our great thinkers of the 19th century, like John Stuart Mill in his *Logic*, Taine in his *Intelligence*, Wundt, Spencer, James in their *Psychologies*, are but new editions, broader in some places, more consistent in others, of Locke's epoch-making book. As a matter of fact, nobody ever went so far in the direction of sensualism and materialism as does James in his well-known theory of emotions, according to which we do not weep because we are sad, but we are sad because we weep, the physical phenomenon not being the effect of the psychical one, but rather the reverse.

Rousseau, thanks in great part no doubt to his unsystematic education, was endowed with a very unprejudiced mind, and he did not hesitate at all to adopt views that were held at the time only by a few progressive men; Locke's ideas on this particular subject soon became his own,⁸ and we can easily see how they came to him. He tells us in the *Confessions* that in the years after his return from Venice to Paris (1744) he had become a great friend of Condillac, then writing his famous books.⁹ He calls him once "*un très grand métaphysicien*."¹⁰ Although Rousseau never went as far as Condillac does in his *Traité des sensations* (1754), in stating that the only origin of all our

⁸ He had already studied Locke at the Charmettes. See *Œuvres*, VIII, p. 169.

⁹ *Œuvres*, VIII, p. 246. Rousseau places this in the years 1747-49, but this must be a mistake since the book of Condillac mentioned by Rousseau was published in 1746. See Appendix I, "Rousseau and Condillac."

¹⁰ *Œuvres*, XII, p. 304; cf. II, 75.

ideas is sensation alone, he shared entirely the views of the earlier *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* (1746), that there are no innate ideas and that our ideas, due to reflection, would never have developed without sensation—the Locke point of view. Rousseau remained true to those beliefs in the time of his mature philosophy; in *Emile*¹¹ for instance, and in the much later *Dialogues*¹² we find them again only slightly transformed. It would be quite interesting to point out the influence of those physiological-psychological views on Rousseau in several special works, especially in the *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, which was written under the inspiration of Condillac's ideas;¹³ and in a book which has not been printed, the manuscript of it being probably lost for ever, *La morale sensitive ou le matérialisme du sage*.

Students of Rousseau, generally, ignore this work entirely, and it is pardonable since the book is lost. But a great loss indeed it is, for surely no work could have given us a better insight into Rousseau's real mind, precisely because it belongs to a period of transition, when he is not yet completely the Rousseau of the *Nouvelle Héloïse* or of *Emile*. We would have seen there how he became the later Rousseau, while now we have to guess more or less. Fortunately the little bit we know about the book we owe to Rousseau himself, and so the information may be relied upon.¹⁴

What was this book? Rousseau tells us that among the works he intended to write—and which later were given up—there was one which he hoped would prove truly use-

¹¹ See Books I, II, III, *Œuvres*, II, e. g., pp. 32-33, 102, 188 etc.

¹² *Œuvres*, IX, 196.

¹³ Cf. *Œuvres*, I, p. 93.

¹⁴ See Appendix II, "Rousseau and Madame de Genlis."—There is, moreover, an interesting problem of erudition in connection with the *Morale sensitive*; but the discussion of it belongs rather in a review for the history of literature. Suffice it to say that further information about the book is not obtainable, at least now, and that all that is reliable goes back to what Rousseau says himself in the *Confessions*.

ful to men. "We have noticed that in the course of their lives most men are unlike themselves and seem to be changed into beings entirely different. It was not indeed to prove so well known a thing that I proposed to write a book; I had a more important and newer purpose. It was to find out about the causes of those variations, and to study those which are dependent on us in order to show how we could direct them ourselves in order to render us better and exert more control over our actions.... In probing myself, and in examining others as to the causes of those different dispositions I found that they depended in great part on the preceding impressions of exterior objects, and that, modified constantly by our senses and by our organs, we were feeling, without knowing it, in our ideas, in our sentiments, in our actions even, the effect of those modifications. The striking and numerous observations which I had gathered were beyond discussion; and by their physical principles, they seemed to me fit to provide us with a physical régime which, adapted to circumstances, could place our souls in the conditions most favorable to virtue.... Climates, seasons, sounds, colors, darkness, light, elements[?], food, noise, silence, motion, rest, everything acts on our machine, and on our soul consequently.... However, I worked but little on that book, the title of which was *La morale sensitive ou le matérialisme du sage*. Distractions which I shall soon explain prevented me from devoting much time to it, and the reader will know also what has become of my first draft...." This passage is from the ninth book of the *Confessions* (pp. 292-3). In book twelve (pp. 46-7) he tells of all sorts of papers that were stolen from the things he had left in care of Madame de Luxembourg at the time of his hasty flight to Switzerland, when the *Emile* had been condemned. Among the stolen papers was the manuscript of the *Morale sensitive*, and Rousseau suspects D'Alembert, who, as a

friend of Madame de Luxembourg may have succeeded in seeing those manuscripts, perhaps by bribing some servant.¹⁵ At that time Rousseau considered D'Alembert as one of his worst enemies, and comments thus: "I suppose that, deceived by the title of *La morale sensitive*, he thought he had discovered the outline of a real treatise of materialism, which he would have used against me as one might well imagine."¹⁶

One may well ask why Rousseau did not take up his work again. I think we can guess the reason, and the very note we have quoted about D'Alembert could suggest a clue. Such a book was not only difficult to write, it might prove positively dangerous. For in conveying upon people the materialistic idea that the dispositions of our "soul" depended ultimately so much upon physical sensations, since comparatively very few, if any, of the former are actually within our control, people might take that as an excuse for not reacting against the lower impulses of the flesh. Thus the book could be interpreted as an excuse for our weaknesses, instead of a remedy against them, and so would provide arms to the enemy, while throwing away our own. Madame de Genlis would certainly not have been the only one to gather from Rousseau's notes the impression which Rousseau himself thought might be D'Alembert's. She reflects: "I never thought that virtue depended upon good digestion or on the temperature of the air, or that certain drinks could cure bad inclinations, and that it was possible to absorb morality, like tea, by infusion."¹⁷

¹⁵ In a note (Vol. XII, p. 47) Rousseau explains that D'Alembert had plagiarized many of his articles before they were printed in the *Encyclopédie* (for the *Elémens de musique*).

¹⁶ One feels inclined to reject such ungenerous suspicions. Still, after the book of Mrs. Macdonald which shows how really shamefully Rousseau was treated by some of his contemporaries, there is a possibility of truth. So, if we should ever get some parts of the *Morale sensitive* back, it might be in looking into D'Alembert. The search may be worth while—the writer not having at hand the books necessary for such an inquiry is obliged to confine himself to these indications.

¹⁷ *Préface à Alphonsine*, p. iii.

The insurmountable difficulty is, of course, that there is absolutely no criterion to decide where to stop in admitting that physical conditions are responsible for our morality. You cannot at one moment step in and say: "Now I will be virtuous," without throwing over the whole theory; for this sudden disposition depends precisely upon foregoing dispositions, and those form an endless chain. Suppose a meal is so made up as not to develop my lower passions; either I am responsible for the meal or another is. If another is, then it is clear that my temper is not in my own hands. If I am, then I must have been predisposed well in order to order the virtuous meal; so from antecedent to antecedent, we are bound to come to admit that we are no longer responsible for anything. The same holds of climate, wind, rest, noise, etc. . . . What can I do? There is no middle term: we are or we are not in control. You may leave the subject alone altogether,—which is very wise perhaps,—but if you take it up, then you must be logical.

Rousseau chose to say that the dispositions of our soul depend upon material conditions; the result is that he will tell us very interesting facts probably, but surely none very favorable to moralization. And the time came when he saw it himself, and therefore he dropped the book. I venture to say that if he had written it, he would have torn it to pieces afterwards.¹⁸ The time when he was thinking of writing it indicates a period of unconscious hesitation between the scientific or psychological point of view, and the ethical or pragmatic. He was then just where James stood when he produced his *Psychology*; the latter's position is defined by Marillier after a long discussion of the book in the following terms: "The teleological character of the system is at first striking, and one must

¹⁸ The book Rousseau had in mind *has been written*; but a century later. Those who are interested to see what a consistent treatise of the sort may become ought to read: Yves Guyot, *La morale*, Paris, 1883 (in the collection *Bibliothèque matérialiste*).

penetrate beyond the literal sense to notice that very often it is a selection of a mechanical character much rather than of an intentional choice that is meant. This W. James says clearly nowhere; perhaps not because he is not decided yet which one of the two conceptions he will make his own, but because he constantly goes from the one to the other without admitting it plainly." (*Revue philosophique*, Feb., 1893, p. 182,)

THE PRAGMATIC PHASE.

James finally decided for a teleological system, or what is now often called—a new name for an old thing—pragmatism. I have shown elsewhere, in quoting texts, how pragmatic utterances had meant at first for James simply a set of rules for practical life, *independent* and really *outside* of philosophy, and how gradually the idea came to him of introducing those merely practical pieces of advice into philosophy itself, and trying to subordinate intellectual and scientific principles to practical principles.¹⁹ The result is that his philosophy now, pragmatic philosophy, is described by James himself in such sentences as: "*The 'true,' to put it very briefly, is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as the 'right' is only the expedient in the way of our behaving.*" (*Pragmatism*, p. 222);²⁰ or "On pragmatic principles we cannot reject any hypothesis if consequences useful to life flow from it. . . . They [universal conceptions] have. . . . no meaning and no reality if they have no use. But if they have any use, they have that amount of meaning." (*Ibid.*, p. 273.) (Of course we must understand that in the second part of the quotation, James means also "*useful to life*," as nothing indicates any change to "*useful*" in a merely scientific sense). Or let

¹⁹ A. Schinz, *Anti-pragmatisme*, Paris, 1909, pp. 52-54.

²⁰ What James says regarding this passage in the *Journal of Philosophy* of December, 1908, does not affect the case very much.

us recall the pragmatic "question": "Grant an idea or belief to be true, what concrete difference will its being true make in any one's actual life?" (*Ibid.*, p. 200.) This is plainly making philosophy a servant to ethics. *Philosophia ancilla theologiae* was the definition of scholasticism; *Philosophia ancilla ethicae* is the definition of pragmatism. ✓

Now let us see Rousseau reaching the same goal.

Exactly parallel to James's phrase: "On pragmatic principles, we cannot reject any hypothesis if consequences useful to life flow from it," is Rousseau's declaration at the end of his career, when he summarizes his philosophical and literary creed, and writes, speaking of himself (Second Dialogue²¹): "I have never seen him listen calmly to any theory that he believed harmful to the public weal." (*Je ne l'ai jamais vu écouter de sang froid toute doctrine qu'il crût nuisible au bien public*).

As was to be the case with William James one century and a half later, Rousseau had really never committed himself to a mechanical conception of life; he had only, for a while, used such language and studied problems in such a fashion that readers could hesitate as to his real opinion on those questions. So when he had once decided to publicly take a stand against such mechanical theories of life, he felt like dispelling any uncertainty in the public, and missed few occasions to come out openly against the materialism of his epoch. He did so repeatedly in his best-known works. Let us take only one example, which is not so well known.

In 1758 he wanted to write a complete and systematic refutation of Helvetius's book *De l'esprit*. He finally gave it up, because the work in question was condemned by the censor shortly after its publication and the sale of it was prohibited.²² But we have the marginal notes put by Rous-

²¹ *Œuvres*, IX, p. 194.

²² *Œuvres*, III, 122.

seau to his edition of Helvetius's book, and they give us a very clear idea of what Rousseau wanted to prove. They are published in the *Œuvres complètes*, XII, pp. 296-304. Helvetius maintained that man is merely passive in his judgments, in his sentiments and actions. This irritated Rousseau and he refers finally to a refutation in the *Profession de foi du Vicaire savoyard*.²³

To Helvetius who thinks that two (passive) faculties, sensation and memory, are sufficient to account for our whole mental activity, and that *comparer* and *juger* are merely other forms of sensation, Rousseau objects that, already in comparison due to memory there is something more than mere passive sensation of difference; and as to the distinction between sensation and judgment, he expresses it thus:²⁴ "To perceive objects is sensation; to perceive relations is judgment" (*Apercevoir les objets c'est sentir, apercevoir les rapports c'est juger*).

The whole discussion is summed up and concluded in the *Profession de foi du Vicaire savoyard* as follows: "Thus I am not merely a sentient and passive being, but an active and intelligent being, and no matter what philosophers say, I dare pretend to the honor of thinking. I know only that truth is in the things and not in my mind which judges them (*que la vérité est dans les choses et non pas dans mon esprit qui les juge*) and that the less I put of my own in my judgments about them, the surer I am to come near the truth:

²³ There is here again a small problem of erudition. We must believe that the notes on *De l'esprit* are made on the first edition, as Rousseau expressly states it in a letter (cf. *Œuvres*, Vol. IX, p. 418); but, as the first edition was of 1758, and the *Vicaire savoyard* is of 1761 or 1762, how could Rousseau refer in 1758 to a work published three or four years later (p. 304)? The whole problem of the relations of the *Profession de foi du Vicaire savoyard* and the *Réfutation du livre de l'esprit* will be examined by the writer elsewhere; let it suffice here to say that a solution is not impossible if one weighs carefully every word of Rousseau in XII, 304. No doubt Rousseau was at the time (1758) already busy with the *Profession de foi*; possibly a good part of it was more or less ready, and thus he could speak of it as of a work in existence although not yet before the eyes of the public.

²⁴ *Œuvres*, XII, p. 300.

thus my rule, to listen to sentiment more than to reason, is supported by reason itself."

Why is Rousseau so much concerned with those theories?—The last passage quoted tells it plainly: if human judgment is merely passive, the same will be true of our emotions, of our wills which depend on our perceptions and judgments of things; if that were true, it would do away with moral freedom, and this would be fatal from an ethical point of view. That this is the attitude of Rousseau is shown in the second part of his refutation of Helvetius, one of his last remarks being: "In the first place uprightness is indispensable, and not intellect (*l'esprit*); and in the second place it depends upon us to be honest people, and not to be *gens d'esprit*" (XII, 304); it is shown abundantly further in all his best known works.

Rousseau is determined to get a philosophy of an ethical nature, i. e., a philosophy which must be good *morally* for humanity, even at the expense of truth if need be; he will refuse to consider any other as he himself told us.²⁵ As a matter of fact, nature, life, and therefore philosophy, are neither moral nor immoral, they are indifferent, or as we say now a-moral; but I repeat it once more, this is just the distinctive character of pragmatism that it would force nature and life, and therefore philosophy, to be moral, or, as some say, teleological,—the latter term meaning again "morally" teleological, it goes without saying. Of course, if nature, and therefore objective truth, on the one hand, and morality on the other hand agreed with each other, philosophy would never have been anything else but pragmatic, it would be so naturally. But as they do not agree, a special philosophy, different from natural philosophy, was to be founded in order to carry through pragmatic, i. e., non-natural philosophical principles. Pragmatic philos-

²⁵ *Œuvres*, IX, 194, quoted above, and cf. with James's *Will to Believe*, p. 126.

ophy is therefore, cannot be anything but, unobjective philosophy, superposed over objective philosophy.

On the other hand, all philosophy to be acceptable must *look* objective and natural, and so of course pragmatic philosophy will have to claim that it is natural philosophy. And as it is not, it will have to try to make us believe that it is: therefore, *to create a confusion between a natural or objective philosophy, and a non-natural philosophy is the very aim pragmatic philosophers will have to pursue*. If they do not do it, if they do not conceal the fact that natural philosophy and pragmatic philosophy do not naturally agree, their cause is lost.

Thus the success of pragmatic philosophers, like Rousseau and James, depends upon their cleverness to confuse things; and indeed they have made it hard for their opponents to disentangle the fallacies of pragmatism. Philosophers ought never to cut Gordian knots; let me try to untie smoothly Rousseau's knot. The whole matter is contained in the last passage quoted.

To reduce philosophy to pragmatic or moral philosophy, two things are necessary:

1. to prove that we are not mere automata, that we can be really moral, i. e., active.
2. to prove that our natural way of thinking is pragmatic or moral, not intellectual; that therefore moral thinking is not merely a special application of pure thinking, of rational thinking, but is thinking itself.

Thus, the two adversaries to be fought will be *sensualism* and *rationalism*.

First, Rousseau forms an alliance with rationalism to defeat sensualism, thus establishing that human beings actually think; that the way in which they think does not depend exclusively on the data of the senses.

Secondly, this once established, Rousseau suddenly turns against rationalism, and says that thinking is bad.

He means, of course, mere thinking, thinking which is not "morally" colored. As morality is the goal, any thinking that is not "moral" is bad, therefore the less one thinks, i. e., thinks merely rationally, the better.

Let us now read over the little paragraph quoted and analyze it and see whether I have betrayed Rousseau's thought.

First he says: "*I dare pretend to the honor of thinking.*"

But he adds immediately: "*I know only that truth is in the things and not in my mind which judges them, and that the less I put of my own in my judgments about them, the surer I am to come near the truth: thus my rule to listen to sentiment rather than to reason is supported by reason itself.*"

The "only" between parts 1 and 2 is a very innocent looking word; as a matter of fact, there is the most remarkable opposition between the two statements connected by it.

The first says: I think; I am not only passive but active in my judgments; I must think, otherwise I am not free and there is no morality possible.

The second says: The more I think, the further away I go from truth; I must *not* think, otherwise I get away from sound moral thinking.

Thus: *first*, I must think (to be free); *second*, I must not think (to be right).

There seems to be another contradiction in Rousseau's attitude towards sensualism and rationalism. Regarding the first he said: Let us not admit that we are passive in our judgments; and regarding the second: Let us rather be passive in our judgments. But never mind the paradox. What he is aiming at all the time, is plainly indicated by the last sentence of the little paragraph under consideration where he opposes *sentiment* to *reason*. He means that we ought not to be affected by intellectual or rational judg-

ments; we must not think intellectually. In other words *he admits the existence of other judgments besides intellectual judgments.*

What are those other judgments, suddenly and surreptitiously thrown into the discussion?—Well, the sentimental judgments, which Rousseau seems to avoid to name, are the moral or pragmatic judgments. But why this fear of speaking plainly, of expressing openly the principles which are at the bottom of his whole philosophy and of momentous works like *Emile* and all the others? Simply because Rousseau felt clearly that this move, the admitting of different sorts of judgments, though clever for his purpose, could not stand the test of critical examination. To judge, which implies to think, cannot *not* be intellectual, and so either to think and judge morally is one and the same thing as to think and judge intellectually, or it is not; and then to judge morally is to judge non-intellectually or irrationally (or a-rationally, that makes no difference.) Now, as Rousseau plainly suggests two kinds of judgments, (*a*) sentimental and (*b*) rational or intellectual, there is no way out of it, the sentimental must not be rational. There would be no use distinguishing them if they were alike.

We come now to the next question. As Rousseau puts those irrational judgments at the basis of his philosophy, refers to them all the time, they must of course correspond to something definite. What is it? What is *practical reason* as opposed to *pure reason* (for this is the opposition which Rousseau establishes and which Kant named so conveniently)? Back of this famous term, *practical reason*, lies the whole secret of the pragmatic fallacy.

When you judge or think, you always judge intellectually or rationally, there is no escape from that; but it is possible when judging intellectually to judge either objectively or subjectively; and now we see at once how “practical reason” can still remain “reason.” You have

pure reason and applied reason, pure philosophy and applied philosophy, as you have pure science and applied science. As a mathematician gives up pure mathematics for astronomy, or a chemist gives up pure chemistry for confection of food, or a physicist gives up pure physics to manufacture telephones, so one can give up pure philosophy for applied philosophy, the most common form of which is ethics. It is still intellectual, but what was the end before, to study and to judge man, nature, life for the sake of pure science, for the sake of promoting objective truth, has become a means, i. e., one applies judgment or thought about men, nature, life to the promoting of happiness, of social order, of morality—no matter how you call it. And this applied judgment, this intellectual judgment in favor of a special end, an ethical end, is the sentimental judgment of Rousseau, or, as he calls it, simply sentiment, meaning of course moral sentiment, or moral sense.

As a matter of fact Rousseau and later pragmatism have done nothing except to say, and try to make us believe, that this applied moral philosophy is really philosophy itself, and that whatever is not moral philosophy (or does not lead to it directly or indirectly; religion e. g. in a pragmatic sense is "moral" too) is not true philosophy. But this is as if an astronomer said that of mathematics only so much is true as can be applied to astronomy; or if a food manufacturer claimed that only that much of chemistry is true which applies to "Force" or "Quaker Oats"; or if a capitalist owning a street-car line maintained that physics is true only in so far as it can move his cars along.

Keeping in mind then that "sentiment" or sentimental judgment of Rousseau is nothing else than a special application of philosophy or pure reason to ethics, let us read in its more explicit form the little sentence ending our paragraph; only two adjectives have to be supplied to betray the fallacy in logic: "My rule, to allow myself to be guided

by sentiment rather than by [pure] reason is confirmed by [practical] reason itself"; or, as we have seen that the second "reason," practical reason, is the same as "sentiment," we will have: "my rule. . . .to be guided by sentiment rather than by reason, is confirmed by sentiment (itself)"—which of course is just the opposite of the conclusion Rousseau wishes to reach; and moreover, a very transparent *petitio principii*; as if a father were going to prove his authority over his children by saying: this authority is proven because I say so. The word "itself" is absolutely illegitimate, and suggests to the reader a confusion which he could not possibly have committed if clear terms had been used, if "reason" was used consistently, and not at first as *pure* reason, and then as *practical* reason.

The fallacies just exposed are more easily recognized in Dewey than in James and Rousseau. Dewey naively attempted an elaborate and painful identification of purely philosophical principles and pragmatic principles on logical grounds; I have shown in the *Journal of Philosophy* (of Nov. 16, 1908) why it was *a priori* impossible that he should succeed, and how in insisting upon logic in pragmatism, he was carried to the antipodes of pragmatism in spite of himself. James and Rousseau wisely did not insist on that part of the matter; Rousseau, as has just been seen, managed to get the whole thing in an innocent looking little bit of a paragraph where probably not one of a thousand readers will notice it—a real trick of legerdemain (done, I need not say, with a very generous and moral purpose in view, a *pieux mensonge* as they say in Rousseau's country). James is as wise as Rousseau; he kept silent. Only once have I noticed that he faced the difficulty, and then the honesty of the man betrayed the attempts of the philosopher: for he implicitly admits that there is really no logical, no rational background to that aspect of pragmatism. This important passage is found in *Pragmatism*,

when James feels cornered by an objection to pragmatic views, which he cannot help mentioning, namely: what has the teleological element to do with truth? "The essence of a sane mind, you may say, is to take shorter views, and to feel no concern about such chimeras as the latter end of the world. *Well, I can only say that if you say this you do injustice to human nature.*"²⁶ Religious melancholy is not disposed of by a simple flourish of the word insanity. The absolute things, the last things, the overlapping things, are the truly philosophic concerns. . . ." (p. 108). Nobody says that you must ignore those "absolute. . . last. . . overlapping things," or even that they are not more important to humanity than merely objective philosophy. But the true philosopher considers that one ought not call objective philosophy that which is only the result of our anxiety to make the reasoning faculty serve moral purposes.

Another passage of James may be quoted here as proof of how much the same preoccupations are at the bottom of both philosophies. I need only recall the fact that what Rousseau called sensualism is now called materialism, and what Rousseau called rationalism is now called agnosticism. Keeping this in mind read James: "Just as, within the limits of theism, some kinds [of theisms] are surviving others by reason of their greater practical rationality[!], so theism itself, by reason of its practical rationality is certain to survive all lower creeds. Materialism and agnosticism, even were they true, could never gain universal and popular acceptance, for they both alike give a solution of things which is irrational to the practical third of our nature ["sentimental" third of Rousseau], and in which we can never volitionally feel at home." (*The Will to Believe*, p. 126.)

For both Rousseau and James the whole problem of

²⁶ The italics are mine.

philosophy consists in this: identify truthfulness²⁷ and usefulness. You can say of a truth "either that 'it is useful because it is true,' or that 'it is true because it is useful' "; and the "usefulness" meant there is pragmatic or ethical "truthfulness," not merely "objective" or "scientific": "On pragmatic principles we can not reject any hypothesis if consequences useful to life flow from it." (*Pragm.*, p. 273; cf. 222, 233 and 234, and the whole of lectures VII and VIII.)

This *ethical* meaning is the meaning of the pragmatic "question": "Grant an idea or a belief to be true, what concrete difference will its being true make in anyone's actual life?"—or there is none.

And notice that we find this famous "pragmatic question" formulated in remarkably similar terms by Rousseau. It is expressed or understood everywhere in his writings; but probably nowhere so plainly stated as in the third book of *Emile*.

In the program laid out by him for the education of the boy, Rousseau proposes for the two first periods, from one to two, and from two to twelve years of age, a merely physical and animal development; the body and mind of the child must be let free, he must get strong and ready for work. Only when he is twelve years of age, shall Emile begin to apply his acquired strength and faculties to some definite purposes. The time has come to teach him. What shall one teach him? There are three, or rather four sorts of things, which man can learn: some are false, some useless, some proper only to develop our vanity. There are a few, however, which are worthy of a wise man: "The question is not to know what is, but only to know what is useful." (*Il ne s'agit pas de savoir ce qui est, mais seulement ce qui est utile.*) Thus ignoring all other preoccupations, the sacred word from now on will

²⁷ I do not see that it makes much difference to say *truth* or *truthfulness*; still as James insists in a special article (*Journal of Philosophy*, March 26, 1908) on that distinction I gladly insert "truthfulness."

be: What is it good for? (*A quoi cela est-il bon?*) This is the lesson you ought to teach the child, namely, to desire to know nothing except the useful. Let me quote the few lines with which Rousseau sums up his whole book of *Emile*: "It is enough that the child should know the 'what for' (*l'à quoi bon*) of everything he does, and the 'why' of everything he believes. Once more: *my purpose is not to give him science, but to teach him how to get it in case of need, to make him appreciate it for exactly what it is worth, and to make him love truth above all.*"²⁸ (P. 179.)—How clear it is here that "truth" means "practical truth," "cash-value," as James says, *in opposition to "science"!*

All this, I say, is good pragmatism.

When it comes to special application of pragmatic principles the comparison holds of course. But as Rousseau has worked out the applications more than the principles and James has done the reverse, it will suffice to refer the reader to the second half of the *Nouvelle Héloïse* where applications follow upon applications under Rousseau's pen. See particularly Part V, Letter 3. One instance, however, may be allowed here: the views of Rousseau and James about religion. I have treated this point at length regarding James in my book *Anti-pragmatisme*, p. 143 ff. I recall only one passage of *Pragmatism*: "*If theological ideas prove to have a value for concrete life, they will be true, for pragmatism, in the sense of being true for so much.*"²⁹ Now here are two short sentences (from among hundreds) showing how Rousseau applied the pragmatic principles a century and a half ago, principles which, when applied, look much less sublime than when vested in the eloquent sentences of the *Profession de foi du Vicaire*

²⁸ The italics are mine.

²⁹ James underlines.—It is true that he adds: "*For how much they are true, will depend entirely on their relations to the other truths that also have to be acknowledged,*" but it is evident that this contradicts the first sentence flatly. If the ideas are true anyway, what is the use of pragmatism; if pragmatic ideas have the first right to be called truth, why bother about other criterions?

savoyard; even here the grand style of Rousseau has dazzled most of his readers. A few years had elapsed since Saint Preux and Julie had yielded to their love; now Julie is married to Wolmar, but Saint Preux lives under the same roof as preceptor of their children. Wolmar goes away and the two former lovers remain alone: "Our hearts," writes Saint Preux, "had loved each other; they had not forgotten; and everything now seemed to unite in making us sin again." Julie was determined, however, to conquer, and "she could not imagine a more reliable precaution than to impose upon herself constantly a witness whom she would have to respect, to call, as a third one among us, the upright and redoubtable Judge who sees secret actions and reads our hearts. She surrounded herself with His supreme majesty; I saw God constantly between her and me. What guilty desire could have attempted to ignore such protection?"³⁰

And on the same page again, discussing the case of Wolmar who was good without religion, Rousseau puts in Saint Preux's mouth the following words: "Milord, we will never be able to convert that man; he is too cold, and he is good; the question is not to touch him [with arguments]; he lacks the interior proof, the proof of sentiment, and this is the only one which renders the others irresistible." This means: Wolmar needs no religion, being good without it; therefore we have no way of converting him. And here remember James's words in the *Will to Believe*, p. 30: "The whole defense of religion hinges upon action. If the action required or inspired by the religious hypothesis is in no way different from that dictated by the naturalistic hypothesis, then religious faith is a pure superfluity, better pruned away, and controversy about its legitimacy is a piece of idle trifling, unworthy of serious minds."³¹ Rous-

³⁰ *Œuvres*, IV, p. 416.

³¹ It is true that Wolmar is not actually presented to us as sharing the

seau said: "And if the Great Being did not exist....it would still be well that man should think of him [*s'en occupât*] constantly, so as to remain better in control of himself, to be stronger, happier and wiser." (*Œuvres*, IV, p. 248.)

To sum up my whole demonstration of the parallelism of Rousseau's and James's thought, I offer the two following passages for comparison. In them, for every one who has in the least a critical sense, these two thinkers give themselves away (if I may so speak) in their attempts at pragmatizing philosophy. These two passages allow us to put our finger right on the spot where the system leaks, or, still better, goes off on a tangent.

James writes in *Pragmatism*, pp. 76-77:

"If there be any life that it is really better we should lead, and if there should be any idea, which, if believed in, would help us to lead that life, then it would be really *better for us* to believe in that idea, unless, indeed, belief in it incidentally clashed with other great vital benefits. [Now listen:] 'What would be better for us to believe'! This sounds very like a definition of truth. It comes very near saying 'what we *ought* to believe': and in *that* definition none of you would find any oddity. Ought we ever not to believe what it is *better for us* to believe? And can we then keep the notion of what is better for us, and what is true for us permanently apart?" That playing with the logical and the sentimental meaning of *ought*, I call the superlative of cleverness.³²

Now to Rousseau. It is a passage from the answer to the archbishop of Paris (*Œuvres*, III, pp. 92-93), who had written his "Mandement" against *Emile*, speaking especially of the *Profession de foi du Vicaire savoyard*.

"It appears to me credible that, after these long periods "naturalistic hypothesis," but that is of no importance here; any thing that is not the "religious hypothesis" may be understood as well.

³² The same has been done by Schiller. See *Anti-pragmatisme*, pp. 23-24.

lost in puerile controversies, men of sense will some day seek for a means of conciliation. The first thing they will propose will be to put out of the assembly all theologians [you might read just as well metaphysicians or philosophers]. This good work done, they will say to the peoples: 'So long as you do not agree upon any common principle, it is impossible for you to understand each other; and it is an argument that has never convinced any one, to say I am right and you are wrong. You speak of what is agreeable to God, but that is precisely what is in question! If we knew which creed was most agreeable to Him, there would be no dispute between us. But you also speak of what is 'useful' to men—that is a different matter. Men can decide that. Let us take this utility for our rule, and then let us establish the doctrine which is nearest to it. We may by this means hope to approach as near to the truth as is possible to men; for *we may assume*³³ that what is most useful to the creatures of His hand, is most agreeable to the Creator."

Exactly the same fundamentally: the useful, in the sense of the morally good, must be the principle of belief, philosophic or religious, the only difference in expression being due to the circumstances under which the passages were written. Rousseau proves a trifle more theological because he answers de Beaumont who attacked his pragmatism on religious grounds, and he wants to show that he is far from indifferent to religious problems; James, on the other hand, is facing philosophers and argues with the aim of turning logicians into moralists or pragmatists.

Of the two, James is altogether more philosophical. Rousseau thinks that he can oppose a systematic and rational philosophy to the objective philosophers on the one hand, and to the dogmatic Christians on the other, namely that in the world everything is rationally and mor-

³³ The italics are mine.

ally harmonious (*Profession de foi du Vicaire savoyard*); while James is more modest and frankly acknowledges that pragmatism requires the giving up of the ideal of unity of thought. He plunges into *pluralism* because reality refuses to be synthetized in his philosophy: "The world is One just as far as we experience it to be concatenated, One by as many definite conjunctions as appear. But then also *not* One by just as many definite *disjunctions* as we find. . . . It is neither a universe pure and simple, nor a multiverse pure and simple." (*Pragm.*, p. 148). James advocates *meliorism* because he cannot be an *optimist*: "It is clear that pragmatism must incline towards meliorism. . . . Meliorism treats salvation as neither necessary nor impossible. . . ." (p. 286). This modesty about the shortcomings of his own philosophy is extremely praiseworthy on James's part; only as it is equivalent to saying that pragmatism does not stand the scientific test of unity of thought, it is from a philosophical point of view, simply suicidal.

THREE CHARACTERISTIC APPLICATIONS OF PRAGMATIC PRINCIPLES.

Our task is really over here. Still it is interesting to remark how closely the two philosophers compare, when one examines some applications of the pragmatic principles which the two men have deemed important to discuss.

Three examples may be selected:

- I. For both men the ultimate purpose of pragmatic principles is to fit people for practical life as much as possible, and thus increase their general happiness. Now the danger is that if you preach happiness outright people are likely to indulge unwisely in pleasures and thus, either to burn the candle at both ends, or to get blasé to pleasure; in both cases it means depriving themselves ultimately of good things just out of sheer ignorance or heedlessness. There was at the time of Rousseau, and there exists un-

doubtedly to-day, a tendency among us to overwork ourselves, so to speak, in making merry, while for purely Epicurean reasons we really ought to refrain more. Thus, both Rousseau and James insist repeatedly in their writings on a sort of asceticism which men must impose on themselves, not at all to deprive themselves, but on the contrary to get *more* enjoyment out of life in the long run, or more power of resistance against suffering. From James I quote the passage of *Psychology*, Vol. I, pp. 126-7, which he has not unfrequently developed in later works, recently in a pedagogical publication. It is found at the end of the chapter on "Habit": "As a final practical maxim, relative to these habits of the will, we may then offer some thing like this: *Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day.* That is, be systematically ascetic or heroic in little, unnecessary points; do every day or two something for no other reason than that you would rather not do it, so that when the hour of dire need draws nigh, it may find you not unnerved and untrained to stand the test. Asceticism of this sort is like the insurance which a man pays on his house and goods. The tax does him no good at the time and possibly may never bring him a return. But if the fire *does* come, his having paid it will be his salvation from ruin. So with the man who has daily inured himself to habits of concentrated attention, energetic volition and self-denial in unnecessary things, he will stand like a tower when everything rocks around him and when his softer fellow-mortals are winnowed like chaff in the blast."

James here takes life in its severe aspect; let us select in Rousseau a few passages where the Epicurean note is more pronounced. The author writes of the incomparable Julie: "The means she uses to give value to the smallest things is to refuse to take them twenty times, in order to enjoy them once." One of the ends she wishes to reach thus, is "to remain her own mistress, to force passions to

obey, and to subordinate all her desires to the rule. It is a new way of being happy; for one enjoys without uneasiness only what one can lose without difficulty; and if true happiness belongs to the sage, it is because, of all men, he is the one from whom fortune can rob least" (*Œuvres* IV, pp. 378-9). Or again: "The privations which she imposes upon herself by this tempering voluptuousness (*cette volupté tempérante*) are both new means of pleasure, and new ways of economizing. For instance, she loves black coffee: at her mother's house she took some every day; she has given up the habit in order to get more taste for it. She has decided to have some only when guests are about, and in the salon d'Apollon, in order to add this little enjoyment to the others" (p. 386). At times this goes so far as to lack the sense of the beautiful: "When I tell her of the things they invent all the time in Paris to render carriages more comfortable to ride in, she approves of that well enough; but, when I tell her how far they have gone in improving the varnishes of the carriages, she follows me no more and will always ask, whether those beautiful varnishes will render the carriages more convenient" (p. 371).³⁴ Shall we say that the heroic "Roman virtues" so emphatically praised by Rousseau lose something of their lustre when brought back to that pragmatic standpoint?

2. In another point, we may call it the metaphysical meaning of life, James and Rousseau show rather striking similarity of thought. Both are anxious to secure for men the happiest and at the same time the healthiest way of living; and not only do they see that the practice of 'virtue' is by no means always accompanied by happiness, but also that people get at times impatient to wait until after death to settle their bills of rewards. So as our philosophers address everybody, and especially the masses, i. e., mostly more or less childlike people, they must find some

³⁴ See also pp. 380, 384, 397 ff. etc.

sort of encouragement for them. They will then pat a man on the back and tell him not to be sulky at the unpleasantness of life, as we do our boys when they are reluctant to go to the dentist and we tell them: Now, you will be a good boy, you will not cry, you will be a real courageous boy. That is the meaning of James's theory of risk: man has the honor, the great honor of conquering evil. This is greatly preferable to just plain happiness; nobody would want that, would he? "Those Puritans who answered 'yes' to the question: Are you willing to be damned for God's glory? were in this objective[?] and magnanimous condition of mind" (*Pragm.*, p. 297).

Rousseau ends his *Profession de foi du Vicaire savoyard* with a few statements that remind us curiously of the last pages of *Pragmatism*: "Why is my soul dependent upon my senses and chained to this body which makes a servant of it and is a hindrance to it? I know nothing about it; did I enter into the secrets of God? But I can without impropriety offer modest suggestions. I say to myself: 'If man's mind had remained free and pure, what merit would there be to love and follow the order established in the universe and to disturb which would give him no advantage?' He would be happy, no doubt; but his happiness would not be of the most sublime kind which is the glory of virtue and a good conscience: he would be only like angels; and no doubt one day the virtuous man will count more than they do. United to a mortal body by bonds no less powerful than they are incomprehensible, the care for the conservation of this body incites the soul to refer everything to itself, and gives it an interest which is contrary to the general order, which it can nevertheless see and love. Then it is that the right exercise of his free-will becomes both merit and recompense, and that man prepares for himself an unalterable happiness in fighting against his terrestrial passions and keeping true to his

first volition."³⁵ In a more solemn tone than James in his last lecture, this expresses very much the same thing: Man has a beautiful chance to be great, to conquer evil; he certainly would not forfeit the honor, the occasion of being a hero, of outdoing divine beings who simply cannot help being good. All this is simply taking man by his vanity so that he may not see the pettiness of his God; the ultimate purpose of the order of things not only is never made clear, but it is positively a stumbling block in a system which claims the rational God of Protestantism.³⁶

3. The last rather striking similarity in the details of the two pragmatisms of Rousseau and James, which will be mentioned here is this: Both want men to be persuaded that there is a spiritual power above us, and they warn against the false claims of vain science. As indeed all superior beings in all times, they both have a deep sense for the mysteries that surround life, and will surround it even if we know a thousand times as much as we do now. In other words, both have a decided predisposition to mysticism. From James we have words like these appearing in his *Will to Believe*: "The negative, the alogical is never wholly banished. Something—call it chance, freedom, spontaneity, the devil, what you will—is still wrong and other and outside and unincluded, from your point of view, even though you be the greatest of philosophers" (p. viii). James has become a member of the Society for Psychical Research. In Rousseau one will not find the theory expressed so plainly, because, as has been said above, he is not as philosophical a mind as James, not feeling the shortcomings of his system and thinking he can keep philosophical unity together with pragmatism. In a way, of course, his religion of "sentiment" is after all mys-

³⁵ *Œuvres*, II, p. 264.

³⁶ Which at bottom is also James's. I have shown in my book how the God of Catholicism is more satisfying than the Protestant one. See *Anti-pragmatisme*, pp. 185-190.

ticism. But further we have a few very interesting facts showing that Rousseau was inclined to believe in certain kinds of *seconde vue* and in the realization of dreams. He experienced one illustration of *seconde vue* himself and told Bernardin de Saint Pierre about it. The latter relates the conversation as follows: "He firmly believed that Divinity had laws of action unknown to men. We were speaking of presentiment, striking dreams, and I quoted some to him. Then he told me: Once when I was in the age of innocence and purity, I was alone in the country, and I allowed my thoughts to wander freely until I finally completely lost consciousness of the landscape around me; and I saw a castle, avenues, hedges, a society of people whom I had never seen, but all so clearly, so distinctly alive that, filled with astonishment, I regained consciousness so struck with the picture that it remained profoundly impressed in my memory with all its details. Many years after I found myself in a castle with the same hedges, personages, figures, actions; and the whole so absolutely alike that I uttered a cry of surprise." (Pp. 102-103.) Now, if we open the *Nowvelle Héloïse* once more, which was to the end the favorite book of Rousseau, we find that he believed in dreams. In Part V, letter 9, St. Preux (Rousseau) sees Julie who comes herself to announce that she is going to die soon. Claire, hearing the dream (letter 10) is all upset; and a few pages further we hear of the accident that caused the young woman's death. Furthermore we have a passage where St. Preux, in spite of the theories which were expressed at the very same epoch in *Emile*, actually believes in the interference of God in the affairs of this world to grant a prayer. In Book V, letter 6, Wolmar tells his wife that her prayers for his conversion would have been heard long ago if there had been a God, and in a sort of ecstasy Julie answers: "They will be heard.... I know not the time and the occasion. Would that I might

procure this with my life! My last day would then be the most useful." And here again the presentiment on the one hand is realized, and the prayer is granted.

* * *

How shall we account for two philosophers so much alike in their departure from objective truth and separated from each other by a century and a half?

The explanation is not far to seek. They both were men before being philosophers; they both cared for the welfare of humanity to such an extent that they could not remain impartial in their attitude towards plain truth as the latter seemed to point to another direction than the one they wanted, and which would always be in full agreement with human ethics. And each lived at a time when society was threatened by scientific theories which were dangerous to the equilibrium of sound moral life in the community. The 18th century was facing materialism; our epoch is facing agnosticism. Rousseau and James both felt that scientific truth was not good for all, that it could easily be misinterpreted by the unprepared minds of the masses, and they proposed pragmatism, i. e., to subordinate philosophy to ethics, to identify truthfulness and usefulness. That the intention was generous, no thoughtful person can deny. Whether the method is commendable is another question; but it is not my intention to discuss this here. I would rather end by asking another question.

Are Rousseau and James themselves satisfied with their theories?

As far as James is concerned I have tried to answer in my book in the chapter called: "Is James a Pragmatist?" Moreover I have discussed above his *pluralism* and *meliorism*; nobody wilfully admits that his philosophy lacks a principle of unity; James was compelled to do it in order to remain a pragmatist.

What about Rousseau? I doubt whether he was ever entirely convinced by his own philosophy.

As early as the time when he wrote his first "Discours" he realized the difficulty of his position (see the last pages of it): if science and art are really bad for civilization, bad morally for nations, then one ought to do away with them. Rousseau obstinately refuses to draw this conclusion; and after several attempts, to reconcile things, he gives this as his final theory: "When people are corrupted [as we are] it is better that they should be educated than not (*savants qu'ignorants*); when they are good it is to be feared that science will corrupt them" (Letter of July 15, 1768). Now this cannot be understood otherwise than: Prevent people from getting corrupt by not allowing them to get objective truth, science and art; but when they *are* corrupt, it is better that they should corrupt themselves more....Of course Rousseau could not mean that.³⁷

Further, I should like to call attention to Rousseau's inconsistency, when he maintains that botany, which is a science also, ought not to be studied for merely practical purposes. At the end of his life especially he strongly objects to those who feel like asking the pragmatic question: *A quoi cela est-il bon?*, who study plants "only with the purpose of getting drugs and remedies." This "disgusting prejudice" is especially strong in France, he thinks: a *bel esprit* of Paris, seeing in London a public garden full of trees and rare plants, was "barbarous" enough to cry out "by way of praise these words: 'Here is a beautiful garden for an apothecary!'" As to himself "all this pharmacy did not sully his enjoyment of the country."³⁸

Finally I refer the reader to the third *Rêverie*, where in later years Rousseau discusses his own philosophy. Among other things he says: "I confess that I did not solve to my

³⁷ See Appendix III, "An Unknown Phase of Rousseau's Thought."

³⁸ *Œuvres*, IX, pp. 375-6.

satisfaction all the difficulties which embarrassed me, and which philosophers constantly opposed to us. But determined to reach at least some decision in matters on which human intelligence has so little hold, and finding everywhere impenetrable mysteries and unsolvable objections, I adopted in every question the 'sentiment' which appeared to me best established by direct data, the most credible in itself, without stopping at objections which I could not remove, but which were met by other objections, not less strong, in the opposite system." And again: "Since then, I have quietly remained true to the principles which I had adopted after so long a meditation. I adopted them as the immutable rule of my behavior and of my belief, without troubling any more about the objections which I had not been able to solve, or had not been in a position to foresee, and which from time to time came up in my mind."³⁹

One sees that there might be room for a chapter "Was Rousseau a Pragmatist?" corresponding to the one on James discussing the same question.

³⁹ *Œuvres*, IV, pp. 342-343.

APPENDIX I.

Rousseau and Condillac.

(See note 9, page 5.)

The passage in *Confessions* VII (*Œuvres* VIII, p. 246) reads thus:

"I had made friends with the Abbé de Condillac who at that time did not yet count in the realm of letters any more than I did, but who was even then well prepared to become what he now is. I was perhaps the first to guess who the man was, and to estimate him at his real value. He seemed to enjoy my company also, and while I kept to my room on the rue Jean-Saint-Denis near the opera house, where I composed my "Hesiod" act [of the opera *Les Muses Galantes* and which was substituted for an original 'Tasso' act, at the request of the Duke of Richelieu], he came to dine with me from time to time, *en tête-à-tête*. He was then working on his *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*....."

In this first book, i. e., at the time when Rousseau knew him so intimately, Condillac, as is well known, proves to be simply a faithful follower of Locke. Like the latter he recognized two distinct sources for our knowledge; "sensation" was not yet considered sufficient but needed the help of a special faculty of "reflection" to produce "perception." It was only later, in the *Traité des sensations* (1754) that Condillac maintained that Locke had not gone far enough and that sensation alone was sufficient to account for all our ideas, emotions and volitions, even

the most complex. As to Rousseau his scientific views of the theory of knowledge never developed beyond the Locke point of view; but to that he remained true and never went back to the Cartesian theories of innate ideas although in ethics he left the sensualists altogether. This can be seen in all his mature writings. Let us take a few sentences only from *Emile*: "In the beginning of life," he says for instance, "the child pays attention only to what actually strikes his senses, *sensations being the first material of knowledge*. If they are offered to him in the proper order, his memory will be prepared to provide him with the data of the senses in the same proper order for his intellect..."⁴⁰ Who would not plainly recognize here the teachings of Condillac? Or again: "The senses are the first faculties which form themselves, and perfect themselves in us. They are the first, therefore, which one ought to cultivate; they are the only ones ever forgotten, or those most neglected..."⁴¹ "In the first operations of the mind, let the senses be guides..."⁴² and so forth. The theory finally assumed a rather peculiar form in one of his last writings, the *Dialogues*, but even then physiological psychology is not given up, but only transformed, or, better, restricted considerably. (Cf. *Œuvres* IX, p. 196.)

It is a question whether Rousseau ever read the *Traité des sensations*. After 1749, he no longer lived near the opera house on the rue Jean-Saint-Denis, but in his own home on the rue de Grenelle-Saint-Honoré, an entirely different quarter (p. 298). However he says that he was still on very friendly terms with Condillac. The latter left Paris for Italy in 1756. One great difficulty regarding the question as to whether Rousseau had or had not read the *Traité des sensations*, and which inclines one towards the

⁴⁰ Book I, cf. *Œuvres* II, pp. 32-33.

⁴¹ Book II, cf. *Œuvres* II, p. 102.

⁴² Book III, cf. *Œuvres* II, p. 138.

negative, is that in 1758 Rousseau discussed Helvetius's idea of reducing judgment to sensation as if he thought that materialistic ideas had never been represented in that way before in France. Yet if he had read the *Traité des sensations* he would have known that it is explained there in very similar terms (see, e. g., Part I, chap. VII); and again Rousseau (*Œuvres* II, 242) suggests an objection to "sensualism" in the same year, 1758, which Condillac had refuted at length in Part III of the *Traité*.

The abbé de Condillac was, by nature, a man of altruistic temperament; and therefore he never allowed his scientific theories, even the most radical ones of the *Traité des sensations*, to influence his ethical views in a materialistic fashion, as other writers of the time, such as the Encyclopedists, most decidedly did. And this no doubt is one of the reasons why Rousseau found him so congenial. Neither is there any doubt on the other hand, that logically his scientific views of the *Traité des sensations* ought to have taken him to the positions which writers like Helvetius took in ethical matters; a proof of it is found in the fact that if he did not draw the conclusion himself, the public did. In our own days Condillac is more or less misjudged as a "materialist" in the moral sense, which indeed he never wanted to be. Rousseau was more cautious; he foresaw the danger and refused to indulge in further development of the ideas of the sensualists, although it would have been more consistent theoretically. He was concerned more with the consequences of the doctrines than with the doctrines themselves.⁴³ But let us not anticipate further development, but bear this in mind for the present: Rousseau, at the time when he had become the friend of Condillac and of the Encyclopedists, may be said

⁴³ The same relation could be shown to exist between Condillac and Rousseau which I have tried to show between Dewey and James in my book *Anti-Pragmatisme*. See also *Journal of Philosophy*, Nov. 5, 1908. Dewey is more anxious for a good philosophical argument in pragmatism, James more concerned with the pragmatic consequences of philosophical principles.

to have been dazzled by the new ideas brought over from England, and thus came near missing his vocation as a moral reformer and inspirer of the French Revolution. This vocation, or at least the realization in his mind of this vocation seems to have come upon him rather suddenly, at the time when he wrote his first Discourse (1749), although it must be admitted that what we might call the pragmatic paradox (of making ethical usefulness the criterion of philosophic truth) had been budding within him long before. See, for example, his early drama *La découverte du nouveau monde* (1740).

APPENDIX II.

Rousseau and Madame de Genlis.

(See note 14, page 7.)

It has been thought by a very loyal admirer of Rousseau—and others have repeated it after him—that we have further details regarding *La morale sensitive* from Mme. de Genlis.⁴⁴ But this is erroneous. In reading the account Mme. de Genlis gives in the preface to her novel *Alphonsine*, one will notice that she employs exactly the same terms used by Rousseau in his *Confessions*, only interspersing them with bits of explanatory phrases to render things clearer, as she thinks. And even in the fifth edition of 1825, which was published during the lifetime of the author, the quotations are all carefully underlined (instead of using quotation marks), which indicates plainly that Mme. de Genlis did not claim to have any other information directly from Rousseau. Moreover, Rousseau was putting down notes for this book in the years 1756 to 1757; now it is pretty sure that he did not see Mme. de Genlis at that time. They might have met at the residence of M. de la Pope-

⁴⁴ See Musset-Pathay, *Vie et ouvrages de J.-J. Rousseau*, Vol. II, pp. 466-470.

linière; but Rousseau visited there chiefly in 1748; and when Madame de Genlis came to that house, it was in 1761, when she was 13 years old. Even if she had chanced to meet Rousseau once or twice before he left for Switzerland—which is highly improbable—it is not likely that Rousseau would have discussed so grave a subject with so young a person. It is true that Mme. de Genlis in her *Mémoires de Félicie* states that she was eighteen when she first met Rousseau, but such defects of memory will happen to ladies, for she was 24, and it was during Rousseau's second long stay in Paris (1770-1778) that she saw a good deal of him, how much is not ascertained yet, for there are inaccuracies in the account.⁴⁵ Did Rousseau discuss the *Morale sensitive* with her then? Here again it seems doubtful. She herself admits that Rousseau thought her too young to be told about the *Confessions*; the same argument in this case would hold for a book that might be so easily misunderstood by youthful feminine brains. Further we are inclined to think that Rousseau did not speak much of this book at that time anyway; in fact he did not even mention it to Bernardin de Saint Pierre, who gathered from Rousseau's own lips a list of the books which the latter had intended to write.⁴⁶

APPENDIX III.

An Unknown Phase of Rousseau's Thought.

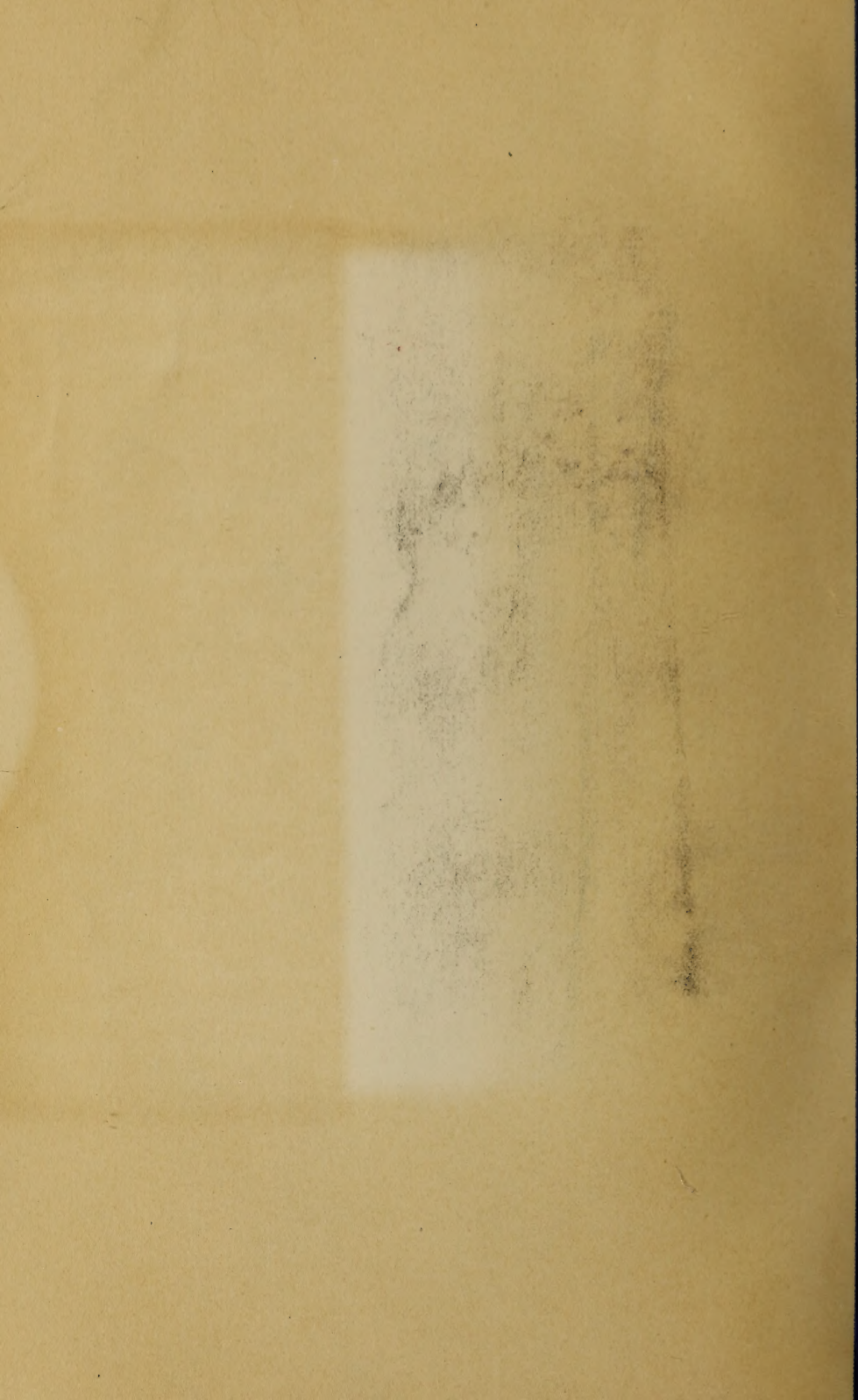
(See note 37, page 32.)

In the continuation which Rousseau had planned to write for *Emile*, (the plan of which has been recently given to us in the new edition of Bernardin de Saint Pierre's *Vie et ouvrages de J. J. Rousseau*, pp. 169 ff.) we see a new phase of development in his ideas, and perhaps we may

⁴⁵ Mme. de Genlis says six months, but it must be six weeks—another innocent little untruth which we are not particularly surprised to find in the memoirs of a lady who is rather proud of her acquaintances with great men.

⁴⁶ See *Vie et ouvrages de J. J. Rousseau*, éd. Souriau, 1907, pp. 150 ff.

guess one of the solutions which he might finally have reached if he had continued to devote attention to the difficulties alluded to in the preceding quotations. We are taken to an island where a good old man and a pretty girl, thrown there by shipwreck, are performing miracles for the sailors who seek refuge at times on their shores; the sailors are rendered happy because they are made to think that the Virgin herself is coming to their rescue and helping them. They do not know of the two Crusoes, and whenever a storm forces them to take refuge in the island they find baskets of fruit awaiting them in a grotto, before a statue of Mary. The girl takes advantage of the echoes of the rugged place to make the people believe that four angels are singing for them celestial hymns, the voices seeming to come from four different parts of the island at the same time. Rousseau seems to praise highly these pious deceptions. In other words, science used by this intelligent girl is rendered beneficent for the simple-minded sailors, for the class of men who, if they had science at their disposal, might apply it to wrong purposes and only increase by it their power for evil. Or again in other words: Rousseau seems to be here in favor of pragmatic ignorance for the masses, while holding that for the select few, science is desirable and desirable in the interest of all: that sounds quite different from the original theory.



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Schinz, Albert

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a forerunner of
pragmatism.

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